

can cause untold amounts of damage and of human misery. No seaman, needless to say, can assume the responsibility for the safety of vessel and crew when less than sober.

After unloading a trip, the boat is washed down and tied to a float or a dock. Then the boys clean themselves up while the skipper and delegate are at the store "settling up," and getting the checks ready. When these two stalwarts get back with the checks and some cash for those who want to go uptown, the boat will empty of life except for one or two who want to write a letter or perhaps take a nap before that evening uptown. If several days are spent at the docks before going out again, and especially if you are not in your homeport, there will be many trips up on the dock.

There will also be many trips to the galley or fo'c'sle of another boat to visit friends and swap stories and "get the latest." This is a favorite pastime and most enjoyable, to meet old shipmates and make new friends, trading information and gossip, and goes on whether you are taking your ease at the galley table, overhauling gear on the deck, or up on the dock. You are part of a club.

But even socializing is not an un-mixed blessing. You may be tied up two or three boats away from the dock or the float, and the deck arrangement of gear and equipment will differ on each boat. There will be something to stumble against on an unfamiliar deck when you return in the middle of the night. Some boats may have carelessly left the hatch open, and the deck lights might be out, or too dim to see well on deck. Gear and stays may hang down from overhead. The inside boat will have fenders out, and therefore will be a foot or two out from the float whose planks may be rotten or slimy from a combination of rain and mossy growth.

If lying at a dock, you may have a long climb up the ladder when the tide is out, and the ladder will be slippery with seaweed. Some ladders of wood will have broken or loose

rungs. Metal ladders are best but may be severely bent from boats rubbing against them. Note particularly if there is a handhold at the top of the dock stringer, to pull yourself up with. Several rungs down, the ladder may be close to a dock timber, giving you only a toehold.

This is the "jungle" in a fishing town. To be alert is to survive. Many fishermen stack the odds further by carrying within a "tankful" of whiskey back to the boat. Those who stepped, slipped, jumped, and didn't bounce, are either no longer with us or carry the scars of their blunder. Most docks are in good shape, but make a careful note of the path you follow when leaving the boat. The open hatches, the broker ladder (which you may not see when stepping ashore at high tide) should be a big question mark in your mind when you return that night and see the mast tops of the boat level with the dock.

The safest grasp on the ladder is its sides, not the rungs, although at

Conclusion

The choice (or necessity) of being a commercial fisherman today is basically a way of making money. However, there are other trades where more or less income can be generated and more fringe benefits received. But there is a presumption or belief that when equivalent earnings are available elsewhere, a person who goes commercial fishing by choice is looking for other values.

One of the ideas advanced and generally agreed to by some economists, sociologists, and fishermen themselves, is the idea that fishermen have more than an ordinary amount of freedom—of independence. This is a generality that varies in truth from fishery to fishery. For precision then, reduce this to the northeast Pacific fisheries, and to those vessels in which a crew of one or more is employed besides the skipper.

the top the ladder sides may be fast to the timbers so that you must hold the rungs. As you reach up, be certain your next handhold is secure before letting go the other hand. Step on the ladder with the rungs under the instep, not on your toes. Use special care on ladder and dock if they are wet. If you do drop off the ladder, the chances of landing between the boat and dock are about 50-50, but you will suffer less damage if falling in the water. Many have not survived this drop because they hit their heads on the boat rail as they went by, or were squeezed between the boat and the piling. If in the water, keep away from the outside of the piling. Your bones will find 20-100 tons of boat to be a rather irresistible force. If unable to climb out, don't wear yourself out. Hang on and holler like hell. Best precaution: travel in pairs if possible.

From the dock, uptown and back, it's all yours. Have a good time and good luck.

Trawling for bottomfish and shrimp; longlining for halibut and black cod; potfishing for dungeness, king, and tanner crab; purse seining for salmon; and to some extent, trolling for salmon and albacore, are the most typical fisheries of the area. Others, like scallop dredging or potfishing for fin fish, are minor fisheries now. These fisheries generate fair to very good incomes, and the stories of big seasons have a basis in fact. But they are exceptional in most cases, and do not reflect the average.

Since the seasons are quite short in many of these fisheries, most incomes are quite high considering the real time spent fishing. Most of the time this is an advantage over shore wages only if the fisherman has a skill to employ while ashore during the off-season, and to which he can come back each year. Many do. Some, without these other skills, resort to

unemployment compensation. Others drift away from fishing because of the uncertainties, because of a bad year.

Some full-time commercial fishermen follow the trade year-round by moving from summer fishing to a winter fishery, such as longlining in the summer and trawling in the winter. But this by no means keeps all commercial fishermen busy year-round. Therefore, an element of the freedom we are talking about can be a change, the cycling from one fishery to another, or the cyclic balance of a comfortable shore job in winter and a summer job at sea. This is a stimulating arrangement, a kind of freedom most wage earners do not have. The extra income from fishing seems to pay for the security foregone in building seniority in a permanent job ashore.

The prerogatives of seniority, of the fringe benefits called conditions ashore, are not a totally unmitigated good. The fisherman surrenders these fringe benefits in return, not for just a better income at sea but for a freedom *from* something else he is leaving behind. These are the negative aspects of his life ashore, and the list is considerable, varying according to the values of the man, his conditioning, his tolerance.

Some of these negatives are:

Punching a time clock: the hourly payment for a physical presence, like the rent on a house or a car. Some view this as a degradation.

Nit-picking, over-the-shoulder supervision: the boss is paid to be boss, so his visibility as a supervisor is kept high.

Restriction of capabilities: the frustration of working at a pace below one's capabilities.

Regimentation: one body among many, last name first; saturation seating on the bus and the plane; waiting in line for a theater ticket, unemployment check, or to buy a hamburger.

In return for an escape from these negative factors and others, the fisherman pays what appears to be a high price in hardship, long hours, and a

restricted life at sea. It is not entirely true to say that he has greater freedom because he submits to a very tough taskmaster who is demanding and getting more from him than is ever attempted ashore. As a consequence, to say a fisherman has greater freedom is not so true as to say he has *other* freedoms, different freedoms. On balance, he pays for this independence by submitting to a harsher discipline and does so willingly because it is largely self-imposed. Not everyone will pay the price, and it is at this point of awareness that some men will either turn to another trade or remain fishermen.

It is not entirely true to say that at sea one of the fisherman's hardships is to be deprived of some shore-side social amenities. On the contrary, because of the absence of these obligatory amenities, he is more free to do the job at hand without any conflict, and to the full limit of his capabilities. In the crew, he is with shipmates of like mind and capabilities. The self-imposed harness does not gall like the limits of work imposed in a shore job.

If any policing or criticism of the quality of work is needed, it comes mostly from shipmates rather than the skipper. Minute supervision is not wanted, nor is it generally needed. It bears repeating that, on a well-run vessel, few words are needed. Individual merit is recognized and acknowledged. The fisherman objects to being "checked up on" and to do a job over that has just been completed by another is offensive to him. But if there is a necessity for re-doing that job, words of explanation are not needed. Actions communicate thus without words, with less likelihood of giving or taking offense. The signals are understood.

Probably the most singular and unique feature of fishing is the ex-

tremely long hours. A 12-hour day is virtually a minimum; from 16 to 18 hours a day is common. The reward is what goes in the hold, and the consequent days off in town. It is interesting to note that some industries ashore are beginning to compress the 40-hour work-week into 4 days and are finding that many workers like and support the idea. There are possibly other "discoveries" of like nature, if management would take the trouble to look at and live the part imposed on their work force.

A man's capabilities aren't limitless, but when working at or near limits of physical endurance, it is surprising how far these limits can be extended and how much personal satisfaction this generates. But a man is not pushed there and cannot be pushed there. He is pulled by the incentives of more pay, recognition of personal worth, and the satisfactions in the job. A singular aspect of shipmates in a crew is that, even years after having been together, there seems to be a personal regard for one another that is not generally accorded a colleague on a shore job.

Yes, there is freedom in being a fisherman, but it is a trade-off inasmuch as he must also submit to restrictions and limits he does not have on shore. The foregoing details of living on a fishing vessel, the faint outlines sketched here, are not complete because the variations are nearly as great in number as there are fishermen.

The fishing industry doesn't make men, it wants them. What is expected of you, is a measure of what you *may* get in return. Fishing isn't harsh, but it very firmly rejects any fudging. After living together for weeks in the same fo'c'sle, the social varnish erodes. The whole man, whatever he is, is exposed. You.

Good luck, good fishing.